Internet exchanges

975. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of internet exchanges in the country;

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to facilitate setting up of the same; and

(c) the extent of international bandwidth available to international users within the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Government has facilitated the setting up of Internet Exchanges in the country at four locations viz. Delhi (NOIDA), Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. Exchanges at Delhi (NOIDA) and Mumbai are operational. Chennai & Kolkata Exchanges are going to be operational soon. 15 Internet Service Providers (ISPs), 12 at Delhi and 3 at Mumbai, are already connected to the exchange.

(c) International Long Distance (ILD) Service has been opened up for private participation since 1 st April, 2002 and there are 4 operational ILD operators. In addition ISPs have also been permitted to set up International Gateways for Internet using satellite and submarine cable medium after taking necessary clearances. As a result of these steps, sufficient international bandwidth is available to the users in the country.

Promotion of free/libre and open source software

976. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken since the announcement of the Linux India Initiative Initiative by Government on the issue of promoting free/libre and open source software within the country;

(b) the level of usage of FLOSS products in Government and semi-Government organizations; and

(c) whether the research benefits of publicly-funded computing institutions would be made shareable to all, by placing the same under the General Public Licence (GPL) or similar licences that do not restrict sharing of knowledge due to copyright restrictions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Two more consultative meetings have been held since then for in-depth discussion on projects and policy positions to be taken-one within the Government and associated agencies and another with NGOs/Civil Society. Various related initiatives, as planned, under initiatives Linux India Initiative exercise are also being pursued.

(b) They are growing.

(c) Research benefits of publicly funded computing institutions are being shared wherever appropriate. For instance, Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) had added components relating to a number of Indian languages for Linux avaiable under General Public Licence (GPL) in September, 2003. Similarly, open office solutions have been provided for Indian languages under GPL developed by C-DAC, CollabCAD software developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) package has also been put in a limited sharing mode within certain agencies of Government. C-DAC has also put its Indian fonts in public domain. Wherever appropriate, software developed under public funded efforts are being shared under GPL or similar licenses that do not restrict the sharing of knowledge due to copyright restrictions.

Availability of Sepectrum to operators

977. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any exercise by Government or the TRAI, taking into account the commercial size of the Indian Telecom and IT market, for valuation of spectrum which could be made available to operators; and

(b) if so, the details thereof; if not, the reasons therefor?